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FM AMCONSUL CHENGDU  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3389  
INFO RUEHOO/CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE  
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 4070

C O N F I D E N T I A L CHENGDU 000182

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 9/3/2019  
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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR HUNTSMAN MEETS SICHUAN GOVERNOR JIANG

REF: A) CHENGDU 141; B) CHENGDU 157; C) CHENGDU 168

CLASSIFIED BY: David E. Brown, Consul General, U.S. Consulate  
General Chengdu.

REASON: 1.4 (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: In an August 28 meeting in Chengdu with Ambassador, Governor Jiang praised U.S. private and government assistance to Sichuan after the May 2008 earthquake and reported that good progress had been made in rebuilding homes, schools and hospitals. Ambassador recalled how, like other Americans, he had great sympathy for Sichuan's suffering in the earthquake. The Ambassador said that the Peace Corps volunteers he came to Chengdu to swear in were part of the future of U.S.-China relations. Both countries need to encourage young people to build the U.S.-China relationship -- our most important bilateral relationship. On the way out of the meeting, Ambassador raised privately with the Governor his concerns about the cases of three human rights activists currently being tried in Sichuan: Huang Qi, Tan Zuoren, and U.S. LPR Yungjun Zhou. End summary.

#### Post-Quake Progress

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¶2. (SBU) Sichuan Province Governor Jiang Jufeng welcomed Ambassador August 28 with effusive thanks for help from the U.S. government and American private citizens following the May 2008 Sichuan earthquake. Jiang said Sichuan was recovering well with a first half of 2009 GDP growth rate of 13.5 percent. Reconstruction of all rural housing damaged in the earthquake would be completed by the end of 2009, of hospitals and clinics by September 2010, and urban housing by the end of 2010. Rebuilt schools would all be ready for the start of the 2010 spring semester. The Governor said that U.S. trade with Sichuan, which in 2008 USD was 3.85 billion, would grow even further as U.S. business was attracted by business-friendly policies that are part of government programs to "Develop the West" and to rebuild Sichuan after the earthquake.

¶3. (U) The Ambassador said he was pleased to make his first visit outside of Beijing to Sichuan Province to swear in the Peace Corps Volunteers. The Ambassador recalled his personal reaction when he was Utah Governor to hearing the news of the Sichuan earthquake and the sympathy all Americans felt for the victims of the Sichuan earthquake.

#### Peace Corps and People-to-People Exchanges

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¶4. (SBU) The Ambassador said that the Peace Corps volunteers were part of the future of U.S.-China relations: both countries needed to encourage their young people to get involved in U.S.-China relations to build personal relationships. The Ambassador said that the U.S.-China relationship was the United States' most important bilateral relationship. The Ambassador said he would mention the fine hospitality he had received in Sichuan when he presented his credentials to President Hu Jintao that afternoon.

Concern re Prosecuted Rights Activists

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¶5. (C) As Governor Jiang accompanied the Ambassador to his car, the Ambassador expressed concern about the cases of rights activists Huang Qi, Tan Zuoren, and U.S. LPR Yungjun Zhou (aka Zhou Yongjun) (refs A, B, and C). Jiang appeared surprised that Ambassador had raised these cases, and with a serious and somewhat agitated demeanor, responded that they would be tried "according to Chinese law."

BROWN